



TOWN OF ACTON
472 Main Street
Acton, Massachusetts, 01720
Telephone (978) 264-9631
Fax (978) 264-9630

oncom@acton-ma.gov

www.acton-ma.gov

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Conservation Commission

December 5, 2007

Transportation Enhancement Steering Committee
c/o Transportation Enhancement Program Coordinator
Massachusetts Highway Department
Bureau of Transportation Planning & Development
10 Park Plaza, Room 4150
Boston, MA 02116

RE: Bruce Freeman Rail Trail

Dear Committee Members:

The Acton Conservation Commission is writing to offer its support for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT). When completed, the BFRT in Acton will be 4.6 miles long; include four Nashoba Brook crossings; run adjacent to Ice House Pond (an impoundment of Nashoba Brook); border 123 acres of conservation land (Nashoba Brook Conservation Area, which connects to another 290 acres of conservation land); run adjacent to and through historic sites (former 19th century pencil factory, railroad depot, and mill sites); and provide indirect connections to the Bay Circuit Trail, North Acton Recreation Area (NARA), and the Woodlawn Cemetery and Acton Arboretum (via the Town-owned Morrison Farm property). The rail trail corridor encompasses wetlands, flood plain, marsh, thick vegetation, forest, open pastureland, and forested uplands. As a result, the rail trail corridor provides nesting habitat for birds and a variety of migratory ducks; homes for beaver, otter, mink and fisher; flood plains known for their trout population; and a contiguous natural land corridor for wildlife such as white-tailed deer, coyote, red fox and fisher. The BFRT will provide the people of Acton and surrounding communities with the unique opportunity to witness the wildlife in their natural settings while at the same time limiting development in these sensitive areas.

We hope you will agree that the BFRT will provide overall quality of life benefits to the Town of Acton and the region, and you will support the enhancement application that seeks funding for the 100% design of the project.

Sincerely,

Terry Maitland, Chairman
Conservation Commission

cc: Acton Board of Selectmen
Roland Bartl, Planning Director